



De Palm Tours advances with the groundbreaking for a new water slide park at De Palm Island

Twenty-five years ago, Harold Malmberg, Chairman of De Palm Corporation, Inc, the operators of De Palm Tours had a vision for Aruba, an island that was just at the point of truly developing their tourism product. At the time, De Palm Tours were the largest tour operators on the island, and though the years have seen an enormous increase in competitive companies, they still hold that position. Harold Malmberg realized that with this growth in the number of visitors the island would receive each year, attention needed to be paid to the activities and amenities offered to them aside from simply the increase in hotels and rooms.

For years, it was Harold Malmberg's aim to create a facility such as De Palm Island, a tranquil oasis on the south side of the island providing easy access to some of Aruba's most beautiful reefs, and offering a full day of entertainment or relaxation, the choice is up to the patron.

As it stands, it offers a wonderful day for all the family with a variety of activities to enjoy, from Seatrek to snorkeling, volleyball courts and basketball courts making it very popular with islanders as well.

Restaurant and day spas reside there, but this is still only the beginning of the plans Harold and his children Ricky and Lisette have for the island.

Over the past weekend, the initial construction of the first phase of a Water Slide Park began, which is a monumental project and engineering achievement. The new Blue Parrotfish Water Slide Park will offer seventy attractions, including six "adrenaline-pumping slides for all ages with fast, medium, and slow velocities....with endless wet and wild possibilities." The first phase of the water slide park will be a complete environment that will easily accommodate up to 500 people not only waiting to experience the slides as there will be water cannons, jungle gyms and a variety of water activities, including, eventually, a "lazy river" around De Palm Island.

Since construction first began on De Palm Island in 1987, it has been Harold's dream to make it Aruba's premiere activity attraction, and he has a number of island businesses assisting him this Herculean task. Working with his crew, headed by Daniel Aguiller, in seeing the Blue Parrot Water Slide Park realized was Jose Wernet, Quality Controller of ATCO, the company that provided and poured the ready mix cement for the foundation. Jose and Daniel were both on hand at a press conference on Monday to say how proud they are to be a part of this "challenging project." Construction of the foundation began on Friday morning, March 17 at 8:00 AM and Daniel did not see any sleep until the finishing of the foundation on Sunday evening at 9 PM. "So, please excuse me if nothing I say this morning makes much sense," he joked with reporters during the Monday morning press conference.

After the initial infrastructure was in place, the transport of the ready-mix cement trucks of ATCO began on Sunday with "the precision of a military operation." Six trucks were transported back and forth to the island on barges from Barcadera until a final tally of twenty-four loads of cement were poured; 190 cubic tons of cement weighing over 500 tons went into the construction of the foundation. The operation was filmed by a special crew from Pro-Video, with Jado on land and Igmarr filming from a helicopter. "The job was very complex, "expressed Malmberg," and we wanted to document it from the beginning to the end. It is a historic day." Dozens of workers industriously took part and the team completed its mission perfectly in just over twelve hours.

This week the construction of the play structures and slides begins, and they are expected to be finished in four to six weeks. Other renovations and additions to the island that are being undertaken include a new welcome booth on the mainland, a surround sound system throughout the island, renovation of the arrivals pier and a new large beach front. More improvements and additions to the island are planned beyond this as the Harold Malmberg's dream becomes a reality, and De Palm Island will soon offer a complete day of recreation for Aruba's visitors and residents.